

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION	TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE MANUAL
Chapter VIII: ASSISTANCE UNIT	COMAR 07.03.03.06
Section IV: MINOR PARENT	

PURPOSE

This manual section provides information on providing assistance to minor parents including the definition of a minor parent and education and work requirements.

I. DEFINITION OF MINOR /MINOR PARENT

- A. A minor child is an individual who is younger than 18 or younger than 19 and a full time student in a secondary school or the equivalent level of vocational or technical training.
- B. A minor parent is an unmarried minor who is pregnant or an unmarried minor who is a parent and whose child or children live with the minor.

II. REQUIREMENTS

- A. A pregnant or parenting unmarried minor must live with the minor's parent, legal guardian, or other adult relative unless:
 - 1. The whereabouts of the minor's parent or legal guardian is unknown
 - 2. The minor has no parent or legal guardian
 - 3. The minor's parent or legal guardian will not allow the minor to live in the home
 - 4. A social services worker finds that it is not in the minor's best interests to live with any available adult relative
 - 5. The minor has lived apart from the parent or legal guardian for at least a year before the birth of the child
 - 6. The minor has lived apart from the parent or legal guardian for at least a year before applying for TCA, or
 - 7. The minor lives in an adult-supervised supportive living arrangement, such as a group home for unwed mothers
- B. The pregnant or parenting unmarried minor must have an adult payee for the TCA grant:
 - 1. If the minor lives with a parent, legal guardian, or adult relative, that adult is the payee
 - 2. If the minor lives in a supportive living situation, the adult supervisor is the payee
 - 3. If the minor lives in another approved situation, the minor can designate an adult payee, or social services staff will help locate one

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C. Do not include in the grant the needs of a minor unmarried custodial parent with a child at least 12 weeks old unless the parent is:

1. A high school graduate, or
2. Enrolled full-time and maintaining 80% attendance in educational activities leading to a high school diploma, or
3. Enrolled in an alternative education or training program approved by the state and maintaining 80% attendance

Note: Apply the education policy to all minor parents, including those under age 16.

There is no good cause for the minor parent who is not enrolled in school, but there may be good cause for not meeting the attendance requirement. (See Primary Prevention Initiative section)

D. The pregnant or parenting minor or the caretaker relative must:

1. Assign child support from the minor's absent parents
2. Assign child support from the minor parent's child's absent parent, and
3. Cooperate with Child Support Enforcement in obtaining child support.

Note: If the absent parent is a minor, Child Support Enforcement may pursue support from the absent minor parent's parents if the minor cannot meet his or her support obligation

E. Refer the minor parent to the Addictions Specialist for screening. (See the section on Substance Abuse for further information).

III. FAILURE TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS

A. When the pregnant or parenting unmarried minor does not live in an approved setting or does not have a representative payee

1. Refer the minor to social services for help in getting a representative payee or evaluating the living arrangement
2. Deny or close the case if the minor does not cooperate with services to get a representative payee or find an approved living arrangement

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B. When the parenting unmarried minor does not meet the education requirement:

1. Impose an individual sanction if no good cause exists.
 - a. Remove the needs of the individual from the TCA.
 - b. In addition, refer the minor parent HOH for mandatory work participation.
2. If the minor parent HOH is not meeting education requirements and not meeting work requirements impose a full family sanction.

IV. **VERIFICATION**

- A. Pregnancy
- B. School attendance or high school graduation
- C. Other verification only if information is questionable

V. **CASE MANAGEMENT TIPS**

- A. Refer questionable living arrangements to Social Services
- B. If the pregnant minor's unborn child has an absent father, obtain all necessary absent parent information for referral to Child Support when the baby is born.
- C. A parenting minor living with a caretaker relative may maintain child status:
 1. After turning 18 if he or she is a full-time student in high school or an equivalent program
 2. After turning 19 if he or she is a full-time student in high school or an equivalent program and will graduate by the end of that calendar year the child turns 19.

EXAMPLES

Example 1. Susie Sanders, age 14, has a 4 month-old son. She is in the assistance unit with her mother and brothers. Susie returned to school after her son's birth, but has only attended 60% of the time and does not have good cause.

- Susie's needs are removed from the grant until she has one month of 80% school attendance. Her mother, brothers, and son remain eligible. (Remember Susie is not removed from the grant but the financial equivalent of one person is removed.)

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Example 2. Sally Summers, age 19, lives with her 17- year-old boyfriend, John, and their child, Jane. They are living with John's parents. John is attending school full-time.

- Both Sally and John must be in the assistance unit because they are the parents of Jane
- John's parents and all other minor siblings have to be in the unit because he is a minor and must be in a unit with his parents and minor siblings until he turns 18

Example 3. Nancy Noodle, age 16, applies for assistance because she is pregnant and her mother has kicked her out of the house. She has moved in with her adult cousin who will be her payee. Nancy's mother confirms that it is not possible for her to return. Nancy is a full-time student.

- Nancy is eligible because her mother will not let her reside at home and she does live with an adult relative who is the payee

Example 4. Diane Dennis, age 15, is living with Tom, the father of her 2-month-old daughter. Tom is 23 and unemployed. Diane states she will not live with her parents and that she has not lived with them for over a year.

- The assistance unit is Diane, Tom, and their daughter. Since Diane has been away from home for a year, she can live independently
- In one month when the baby is 12 weeks old, Diane must become a full-time student or the case will be ineligible. This is a two parent household and she is not a child in the unit, but is head of household or living in a common-law relationship with the head of household
- Tom is the payee

Example 5. Jennifer Johnson, age 17, was in a grant with her mother and siblings. She became pregnant and moved in with a family friend. Jennifer says her mother does not like her boyfriend. Jennifer's mother will let her come home, but Jennifer refuses, claiming the environment is unsafe. Social services finds the home to be safe and acceptable.

- Jennifer is not eligible to be part of a grant unless she returns to her mother's home since she is not with a parent, legal guardian or adult relative

Example 6. Jennifer still refuses to move back with her mother and moves in with her boyfriend's parents who are willing to be the payee for the grant. Her boyfriend has been incarcerated.

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- Jennifer is now eligible to receive assistance since she is living with the grandparents of her baby